



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Book Notices.

ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN LETTERS.¹

When, in 1892, Dr. Robert Francis Harper announced his intention of publishing all the letters of the Kouyunjik collections in the British Museum, it was generally recognized that he had undertaken no light task. The letter tablets are notoriously difficult to copy, their number is very large, and the labor of editing the whole mass of the material may safely be termed most formidable. To carry such a work through to successful completion a very large amount of zeal and perseverance was demanded. Fortunately Dr. Harper possesses these qualities, and he has now placed in the hands of Assyriologists about half the letter material to be found in the British Museum. The three new volumes contain 338 letters, so that in all 876 texts are now included in the series. That a certain number of these texts have already been published by other Assyriologists is no disadvantage. The plan of Harper's work contemplates the publication of a complete *Corpus Epistolarum*, and it is manifestly far more convenient for the student of Assyrian epistolary literature to find all the letters included in a single work, than to have to seek them through a number of Assyriological publications. The existence of two or more editions of the same text has, moreover, the advantage that it enables a student, who has not access to the original, to compare the readings of several copyists. In this connection it may be suggested that a list of such texts as have been published, translated, or discussed elsewhere than in Harper's *Corpus*, together with full references to the publications in which they are to be found, would be a most valuable addition, and would greatly facilitate the studies of all workers in this branch of Assyriological literature. The plan of Harper's work also includes the publication of all the letters of each scribe, no matter how fragmentary the text may be in individual cases. This is the only scientific plan, and Dr. Harper is to be commended for adhering to it so faithfully. A single word upon a broken tablet may be of great importance, and it is by the publication of all the material without reserve that the interests of Assyriology will best be served.

It would, of course, have been more convenient could all the letters of the same scribe have been grouped together, but to do this would have much delayed the work. In fact, until the completion of Bezold's *Catalogue* it was practically impossible to effect such an arrangement,

¹ ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN LETTERS BELONGING TO THE KOUYUNJIK COLLECTIONS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM. By Robert Francis Harper, Ph.D., Professor of the Semitic Languages and Literatures in the University of Chicago. Parts VI, VII, and VIII. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; London: Luzac & Co: 1902.

and, after all, the prompt publication of the texts is far more useful than a rigid adherence to a hampering system. The inconvenience of having the letters of the same writer scattered through several volumes is, moreover, satisfactorily remedied by the index (No. iv) at the end of Vol. VIII, which gives full references to the whole series. In Vol. IX we are promised a complete index of all the proper names, officials, divinities, countries, peoples, and cities to be found in the preceding eight volumes. This is the more urgently needed since very few of the letters are dated, and it is only by internal evidence, especially by the mention of contemporary personages, that approximate dates can be assigned and the historical bearing of the individual texts be made to appear. The index given in the last volume of Bezold's *Catalogue* is very complete, but this work is not always accessible, and the advantage of a special index to the letters in the same series with the texts themselves is too apparent to require comment. So far, the indices in Harper's volumes contain the names of the scribes printed in cuneiform type and arranged in the order in which their letters are published, a method which certainly exhibits all the orthographic varieties, but is not particularly conducive to ready reference. Experience has shown that cuneiform is ill adapted to the purposes of an index, for which convenience of reference should be the prime consideration, and it is to be hoped that Dr. Harper will modify his intention, expressed in the preface to Part VI, and will give the general index, to be published in Part IX, in transliteration, and, of course, in strict alphabetical arrangement. The plan offers no special difficulty, since in the great majority of cases the reading of the names is perfectly clear. The orthographic varieties could be presented in syllabic transliteration under the typical forms, and the small number of doubtful cases could be relegated to a separate index where cuneiform type would be appropriate. The use of heavier type to distinguish the names of the scribes would also be useful.

Except in the initial formulæ of greeting, very few restorations have been attempted, and these few have been strictly limited to cases in which the reading is obvious. For the sound judgment exhibited in following this course Dr. Harper is entitled to all praise. The temptation to insert an ingenious restoration may be very strong, but the first duty of an editor is to reproduce the text as faithfully as possible, and this Dr. Harper has certainly done. Restorations and emendations are apt to be of a more or less conjectural nature and find their proper place in a commentary.

Of the three new volumes of the *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, Part VI is exclusively devoted to letters from which the name of the writer has been broken away, while Parts VII and VIII contain chiefly such texts as were necessary to complete the correspondence of those writers whose letters had been given in part in the preceding volumes. Bel-ibnī, the well-known general of Ašurbanipal, appears as the writer of Nos. 789-795. In one of these (No. 792, l. 5) the Elamite Ummanšibir is mentioned; he must, of course, be identical with the nāgir Umman-

šibar (hitherto read Ummanšimaš) whose name occurs in K. 13 (= H. 281), l. 11. In the same letter Bel-ibnī makes the interesting statement that the Elamites are inclined to surrender Nabû-bel-šumâte, the rebel king of the Gulf district, but there would appear to be some obstacle which the mutilation of the text at this point renders obscure. Further on (rev. ll. 4 *sqq.*), the Assyrian general states that he proposes to visit the king, bringing with him a thousand prisoners that he has captured. No. 793 (= 83-1-18, 79) is practically a duplicate of No. 283 (= K. 597), the former being addressed to the king and the latter to the rab-šaḡ, but whether the Bel-ibnī who writes these two letters was the well-known personage of that name is uncertain. The initial formula of No. 793 (ana dinân šarri beli'a lullik) and the deities (Nabû and Marduk) invoked in both letters would seem to point to a different individual. No. 736, a petition to the king from the people of Kisik, complains that certain fellow citizens of the petitioners, having been carried off to Elam by Nabû-bel-šumâte and imprisoned there, had made their escape to the Gulf district, but had been seized and thrown into prison by Bel-ibnī. It may be noted that another communication from the same people (No. 210 = K. 647) also seems to contain a reference to Bel-ibnī (rev. l. 12), though the first part of his name is broken away. Although the initial lines of No. 576 (= K. 1009) are mutilated, it is evidently a communication from the elders (šebûti, obv. l. 2; rev. l. 9) of the Gulf district to the king, and contains the information that Tumman (*i. e.*, of course, Te'umman), "brother of the king of Elam," is making endeavors to place Nabû-Salim, son of Merodach-baladan, upon his father's throne. The people decline to receive him, protesting their loyalty to their lord, Na'id-Marduk, and to their suzerain, the king of Assyria. Upon this they receive a very peremptory and threatening message which they report to the king. The king of Elam, referred to as the brother of Te'umman, must have been either Umman-aldas or Urtaku, and the letter affords an interesting glimpse into the affairs of the Gulf district and the conflict there between the interests of Elam and Assyria. The important letter of Kudurru, governor of Uruk, in reference to the rebellion of Šamaš-šum-ukīn (K. 5457 = H. 755) is given in Part VII, and the same volume contains two letters, unfortunately badly mutilated, of Sennacherib. Among the better-known writers represented in Parts VII and VIII may be mentioned Adad-šum-uḡur, whose letters are models of courtly style; the astrologers Nabû'a, Balast, and Ištar-šum-ereš; Nabû-ušabši, governor of Uruk in the reign of Ašurbanipal; and Ištar-dûri, who filled the office of eponym in the year 714 B. C.

The three new volumes of the *Letters* are edited with the care and skill that we have learned to expect of Dr. Harper, and their appearance must be a welcome event to every Assyriologist. The typography is, as usual, excellent.

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTON.